

Spectrum



Junior ROTC cadets negotiate the pipe crossing on the obstacle course May 31 at Training Area 6 on post as BNCOC students serve as instructors.

Photos by Bonnie Heater

Camp Semaphore challenges cadets

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The Regimental Noncommissioned Officers Academy hosted the 2007 Junior Cadet Leadership Challenge Camp at Fort Gordon May 30 through June 1. The 3-day summer camp known as Camp Semaphore brought out 137 cadets from the age of 14 to 18 years old and 18 Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps instructors from eight high schools in Richmond and Columbia counties, according to retired Lt. Col. Patrick Rivette, camp commander and an Evans High School JROTC instructor.

Navy JROTC cadets from Glenn Hills High School and Marine JROTC cadets from Butler High School joined Army JROTC members from the Academy of Richmond County High School, Evans High School, Harlem High School, Hephzibah High School, Lakeside High School and Lucy Laney High School during the annual summer camp, according to retired Lt. Col. Boyd Long, camp operations officer and a Hephzibah High School JROTC instructor. Long is also the JROTC liaison officer for all Richmond county schools.

"The intent of the camp is to provide JROTC cadets a challenging, meaningful, and practical learning experience while developing positive leadership, teamwork, citizenship skills, and knowledge while building individual self confidence and discipline through hands on adventure and team building exercises," said retired Maj. Milton Gray, the senior Army JROTC instructor at Harlem High School. "The camp provides the cadets an opportunity to interact with peers from diverse backgrounds in a safe military style environment," added the public affairs and safety officer for Camp Semaphore.

"This is not a recruiting mechanism," explained retired Lt. Col. Thomas Murphy, camp personnel officer and the senior Army JROTC instructor for Lucy Laney High School. "Our mission is to motivate young people to be better citizens," he said.

During the 3-day camp cadets were divided up into companies. Each day the companies would compete in different training events. Cadets rappelled off a 60-foot tower at the Youth Challenge Academy on post after receiving training and a safety briefing. For Cadet Curtis Cato, an eleventh grader at Hephzibah High School, it seemed an easy task. "This makes the fifth time I have rappelled," he said.

The cadets also participated in land navigation training at Training Area 26 and a one rope bridge competition which was held at the RNCOA class field training site, Training Area 14, located near the post veterinarian clinic. After a safety briefing and a demonstration the cadets were divided up into six groups of eight people. They were given time to practice building a rope bridge. This was followed by a timed competition in which each group built a bridge. Members of the Basic Noncommissioned Officer Course volunteered to assist with the 3-day JROTC camp. One of the NCOs serving as an instructor expressed his reason for helping the cadets with their summer camp. "NCOs want to train and teach Soldiers," said Staff Sgt. Daniel Crooks, the class leader in BNCOC class 25S-022-07. "We can make a difference. It's all about setting an example and giving them a good image of a Soldier. Many of these cadets will probably go on to join the military after graduating from high school. Camp Semaphore gives them an opportunity to know what it takes to be a good Soldier."

Another training event the BNCOC students assisted the cadets with was the obstacle course. In the course cadets negotiated the tire step, horizontal ladder, pipe crossing, a tunnel, rope climbing, and crawled under a wire obstacle about 1.5 feet high. They also negotiated a vault, crawled under a low rail, jumped over knee-high hurdles, and jumped from one side of a ditch obstacle to the other side while not falling into the ditch.

In the leadership reaction course, which was held at Training Area 6, teams made of 8 to 10 cadets tackled five different challenges. After being briefed on the objective of each obstacle, the team leader, which changed with each challenge, was required to

brief his/her team. They were given 10 minutes to brief and brainstorm how they were going to safely complete the challenge in the allotted 15 minutes. In the first challenge the cadets were informed that there were two boxes containing 7 bricks each and they had to get the boxes and bricks safely across to the other side of the obstacle. A brick could be held by a cadet for only 10 seconds. They cadets had to move through the obstacle via a stone path. They could not slip off the stones nor could they drop the box or the bricks.

During each task in the leadership reaction course the leader could receive a maximum of 40 points during the communication-leader receiving and briefing section.

Trainers graded the leader on if he/she brought the team up to the site for briefing, if team members listened to the leader during the briefing, and if the leader gave clear, complete and concise instruction of the task at hand. The instructors also rated the leader if safety instructions were given prior to completing the task.

The teams could also earn a maximum 30 points per task for leading and team building and an additional 40 points if the task or mission was accomplished in the allotted time of 15 minutes. Points were deducted for safety violations and loss of personnel or equipment during the completion of a task in the leadership reaction course.

At the indoor swimming pool in Building 21608 on Barnes Avenue cadets were completing waterborne survival training. Cadets learned six different methods to turn their Battle Dress Uniform shirts and pants into floatation devices to keep from drowning. Instructing the JROTC cadets during the 3-day camp were volunteer members from BNCOC. The classes providing Soldiers as instructors were 25N-016-07, 25U-014-07, 25 S-022-07, and 25P-024-07.

The 3-day camp concluded June 1 with an award ceremony which was held at RNCOA. Company B was the overall winner of the 3-day competition. Cadets received certificates of completion and a Camp Semaphore medallion before departing.



(Above) A team of five cadets dashes off with determination to complete the timed obstacle course. (Left) At the leadership reaction course cadets had to figure out how to get all of them at the same time on the stump located at team stand station seven while remaining on it for a full 30 seconds. (Right) Graduates of the 2007 Junior Cadet Leadership Challenge camp received a certificate of completion and a medallion during the last call formation and award ceremony on June 1.

